

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BANGKO 05931 270606Z
ACTION L-03

INFO OCT-01 EA-10 ISO-00 HA-05 IO-13 /032 W
-----048280 270611Z /17

R 270500Z FEB 78
FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 637

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: SHUM, TH
SUBJECT: ICJ LAWYER INVESTIGATING HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN
THAILAND

1. MR. DAVID HALLMARK, A BRITISH LAWYER WORKING FOR THE INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION OF JURISTS (ICJ), IS NEARING THE END OF A TWO MONTH INVESTIGATION INTO ALLEGED HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN THAILAND. HALLMARK, WHO ARRIVED IN BANGKOK ON JAN 9 TO LOOK INTO THE CASE OF THE "THAMMASAT 18", HAS BEEN BUSILY COMPILING A DOSSIER OF REPORTED HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS, INCLUDING ALLEGATIONS OF ARBITRARY DETENTION UNDER NARC ORDER 22 AND THE DISAPPEARANCE OF SEVERAL LABOR AND POLITICAL ACTIVISTS. HALLMARK TOLD EMBOFF THAT MOST ALLEGATIONS OF GOVERNMENT COMPLICITY ARE DIFFICULT TO CORROBORATE. HE INTENDS TO QUERY RTG OFFICIALS IN HOPES OF SHEDDING LIGHT ON SITUATION. HE PROMISED TO KEEP US INFORMED OF HIS FINDINGS.

2. HALLMARK HAS ATTENDED SEVERAL SESSIONS OF THE "THAMMASAT 18" TRIAL. HIS VIEW OF THE TRIAL IS THAT INTERNATIONAL ATTENTION HAS PRODDERD THE RTG TO TAKE THE NECESSARY MEASURES TO INSURE THE DEFENDANTS RECEIVE A FAIR SHAKE. HE CITED, FOR EXAMPLE, THE KRIANGSAK GOVERNMENT'S MOVE TO PERMIT THE DEFENDANTS TO HAVE DEFENSE LAWYERS.

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3. SATISFIED THAT THE THAI GOVERNMENT IS TREATING THE "THAMMASAT 18" AS A SPECIAL CASE AND WILL NOT RISK FURTHER INTERNATIONAL EMBARRASSMENT OVER ISSUE OF THE OCTOBER 6 DETAINEES, HALLMARK HAS SOUGHT TO DETERMINE IF THERE ARE OTHER PATTERNS OF HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS. ON FEB 24 THE BANGKOK POST REPORTED THAT HE HAD

DEPARTED FOR THE SOUTHERN PROVINCE IN SURAT THANI TO INVESTIGATE THE ARREST OF THREE PERSONS WHO WERE WORKING FOR THE COORDINATING GROUP FOR RELIGION IN SOCIETY (CGRS), A THAI HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANIZATION. A MEMBER OF CGRS TOLD EMBOFF THAT THE THREE PERSONS HAD BEEN INVESTIGATING THE DETENTION OF SEVERAL VILLAGERS IN SURAT THANI HELD ON CHARGES OF BEING "DETRIMENTAL TO SOCIETY" -- AN APPARENT REFERENCE TO ONE OF THE PROVISIONS OF NARC ORDER 22. TWO OF THE CGRS WORKERS ARRESTED WERE FORMER CHULALONGKORN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS (ONE OF WHOM HAD APPARENTLY FLED TO THE JUNGLE AFTER THE OCTOBER 6 COUP AND HAD RECENTLY RETURNED WITH THE HOPE OF RE-ENTERING THE UNIVERSITY). THE THIRD PERSON WAS A RESIDENT OF SURAT THANI WHO WAS RELATED TO ONE OF THE DETAINEES IN QUESTION. THE CGRS SPOKESMAN SAID THEY WERE HOPEFUL THEIR WORKERS WOULD SOON BE FREED ON BAIL. AN ARTICLE IN THE NATION FEB 24. SAID THE CGRS WORKERS WERE BEING HELD ON CHARGES OF COMMUNIST ACTIVITY AND HAD BEEN DENIED BAIL.

4. COMMENT: WE SHARE HALLMARK'S OPINION THAT IT WILL BE DIFFICULT TO SUBSTANTIATE ALLEGATIONS OF RTG COMPLICITY IN REPORTED DISAPPEARANCES AND MYSTERIOUS DEATHS OF POLITICAL AND LABOR ACTIVISTS. WE HOPE TO OBTAIN A REPORT OF HIS FUNDINGS IN CONNECTION WITH THE INCIDENT IN SURAT THANI AND ON THE HUMAN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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RIGHTS SITUATION IN GENERAL. END COMMENT.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: HUMAN RIGHTS, INVESTIGATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 27 feb 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978BANGKO05931
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780089-0244
Format: TEL
From: BANGKOK
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780211/aaaaairm.tel
Line Count: 96
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 678308ce-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION L
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 05 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: N/A
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3449816
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ICJ LAWYER INVESTIGATING HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN THAILAND
TAGS: SHUM, TH, ICJ, (HALLMARK, DAVID)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/678308ce-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014